Alberta Human Rights
and Citizenship Commission

Annual Review 2000 – 2001

Alberta
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission

Annual Review
2000 – 2001

Page 2

Contents

4 **About the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission**

7 Highlights
7 Human rights complaints
8 Process improvements
9 Education services

11 **Part I: Complaint resolution and settlement process provided by the regional offices and Director's office**

11 Overview of the complaint resolution and settlement process
11 Inquiries and information
11 Submitting a human rights complaint
11 Determining whether to accept a human rights complaint
12 Next steps
12 Two methods for resolving human rights complaints
12 Conciliation
13 Investigating human rights complaints
13 Settling a human rights complaint where merit is found
14 Dismissing or discontinuing a complaint
15 Withdrawn or abandoned complaints

15 2001 – 2002 Results
15 Complaint files opened and closed
16 Grounds of discrimination in complaint files opened
18 Sections of the Act cited in complaint files opened
20 Disposition of closed complaint files
Conciliated files
Investigated files
Dismissed files
Discontinued files
Withdrawn or abandoned files
23 Time frame for closed complaints

Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission

Annual Review
2000 – 2001

Page 3

26 Part II: Appeals to the Chief Commissioner and the human rights panel

26 The Commissioners
26 Overview of the referral, appeal and panel processes
26 Referral to the Chief Commissioner when parties are unable to settle a complaint with merit
26 Appeals to the Chief Commissioner
27 Human rights panels

28 2001 – 2002 Results
28 Appeals reviewed by Chief Commissioner
28 Disposition of complaints scheduled for or heard by panels
31 Panel decisions 2000 – 2001

35 Part III: Education services

35 Recognizing Albertans for their achievements in human rights and celebrating International Human Rights Day
35 National Human Rights Conference
36 Other Commission education services
38 Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund

40 Part IV: Accountability

40 Measuring public awareness of the Commission and confidence in the Commission's work
40 Percentage of Albertans who believe human rights are fairly well or very well protected in Alberta
41 Percentage of Albertans who are aware of the Human Rights and Citizenship Commission
42 Percentage of Albertans who believe the Commission plays an important role in the protection of human rights

43 Contact information

Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission

Annual Review 2000 – 2001

Page 4

About the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission

In Alberta, the Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act (the Act) protects Albertans from prohibited discrimination. The Act establishes the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission to carry out functions under the Act. The Commission is an independent body created by the Government of Alberta, which reports through the Ministry of Community Development.

Through the provisions outlined in the Act, the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission follows a two-fold mandate:

- to foster equality, and
- to reduce discrimination

The Commission fulfills this mandate through public education initiatives and the resolution and settlement of complaints of discrimination.

The purpose of the Act is to ensure all Albertans are offered an equal opportunity to earn a living, find a place to live and enjoy services customarily available to the public without discrimination.

The Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act protects Albertans against discrimination in the following areas:

- publications and notices
- goods, services, accommodation and facilities
- tenancy
- employment practices
- applications and advertising regarding employment
- membership in trade unions, employers' organizations or occupational associations

Within the areas listed above, it is a contravention of the Act to discriminate against any person on the basis of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, family status or source of income. As of April 2, 1998, sexual orientation was read into the Act as a protected ground in all areas. Age is also a ground protected from discrimination, except in the areas of tenancy and goods and services.

In addition to the areas and grounds discussed above, the Act protects Albertans in the area of equal pay. This provision requires that where employees of both sexes perform the same or substantially similar work for an employer, they must be paid at the same rate.

The Act also prohibits a person from retaliating against any person who has made a complaint, or given evidence or assisted any one else in making a complaint. The Act also does not allow a person to make a complaint with malicious intent that is frivolous or vexatious.

Section 16 (1) of the Act outlines the functions of the Commission:

- to forward the principle that all persons are equal in: dignity, rights and responsibilities without regard to race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, or sexual orientation,
- to promote awareness and appreciation of and respect for the multicultural heritage of Alberta society,
- to promote an environment in which all Albertans can participate in and contribute to the cultural, social, economic and political life of Alberta,
- to encourage all sectors of Alberta society to provide equality of opportunity,
- to research, develop and conduct educational programs designed to eliminate discriminatory practices related to race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, or sexual orientation,
- to promote an understanding of, acceptance of and compliance with this Act,
- to encourage and co-ordinate both public and private human rights programs and activities, and
- to advise the Minister on matters related to this Act.

An appointed Director and other employees handle the administrative responsibilities relating to the resolution and settlement of complaints made under the Act. The Director and staff are also responsible for providing education programs and services that aim to eliminate discrimination and remove barriers that prevent Albertans from fully participating in society. The work of the Director and staff is separate and distinct from the adjudicative work of the Commissioners and is discussed further in Part I and Part III of this report.

The Chief Commissioner and part-time Commissioners are appointed by Order in Council. Decisions by the Director to dismiss or discontinue complaints can be appealed to the Chief Commissioner. The Chief Commissioner also appoints Commissioners to serve on human rights panels. The panels are administrative tribunals that hold public hearings into complaints that are not closed through the Commission's resolution and settlement process. The purpose of the human rights panels is to adjudicate complaints to determine whether or not there has been a contravention of the Act. The work of the Chief Commissioner and the Commissioners is discussed in Part II of this review.

Highlights

Human rights complaints

In 2000 – 2001 the Commission opened 645 complaint files, a small decrease from the 692 files opened in 1999 – 2000. This decrease was due in part to more effective screening and assessment of complaints. As in the previous three years, physical disability and gender continued to be the two most common grounds on which complaints were made. Many complaints alleged discrimination on multiple grounds. A total of 897 grounds were cited in the 645 files opened.

In 2000 – 2001 and for three of the past four years the Commission has closed more files than it has opened. The 693 files closed in 2000 – 2001 was significantly less than the 822 files closed in 1999 – 2000. However, the fewer files closed in 2000 – 2001 as compared with the previous year relate to process improvements which have lowered the overall number of files in the system. As of March 31, 2001, there were 581 complaint files in the system. This compares to 629 files in the system on March 31, 2000 and 759 files on March 31, 1999.

The vast majority of complaints — 662 files (96 per cent) — were dealt with through the commission's compliance process, meaning they were resolved through conciliation, settled through investigation, dismissed or discontinued by the director, or withdrawn or abandoned by the complainant. In the past three years, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of files that closed through the conciliation and investigation services provided by Commission staff. In 2000 – 2001, 67% of files closed through these two processes, as compared to 60% of files in 1999 – 2000, and 55% of files in 1998 – 1999.

The remaining 31 files, (four per cent) closed through the panel process. The parties settled 17 of the complaints scheduled for panel hearings prior to a hearing. One complainant withdrew the complaint before the panel hearing. In one other case, the Court of Queen's Bench overturned the Chief commissioner's decision to send the complaint to a panel and the file was closed. Twelve human rights panels were convened to hear and make decisions on the remaining 12 complaint files. This compares to the 10 panels that were convened in 1999 – 2000 to hear a total of 27 complaints. The panel process is independent from the work of Commission staff in resolving and settling complaints. Human rights panels are appointed by the Chief Commissioner and are composed of human rights Commissioners.

Process improvements

The Commission continued to streamline its processes and deliver high-quality intake, conciliation and investigation services. Results of these improvement initiatives include fewer files in the system, compared with the past two years, and movement of files through the system in a timelier manner.

The Commission is consistently meeting its performance target of closing 50% of accepted files at the conciliation stage. Fifty-four percent of complaints were resolved by the parties through conciliation in 2000 – 2001 as compared with 44% in 1998 – 1999. This is a critical performance target because files that close at this stage do not move on to the more time and labour intensive investigation stage and the panel stage.

Hiring conciliators, investigators and legal counsel on contract, modifying the approach to complaint processing to enable early conciliations or early dismissals when appropriate, addressing staff needs respecting ergonomic health and workstation issues and operational tools, including new or upgraded computers and improved technological support, providing additional training, and adding to the research resources, have all helped to improve the Commission's results. As well, the Commission rationalized its assignment of complaints to minimize duplication, so that certain types of complaints were handled within a region regardless of where they occurred within the province. Approaches to handling complaints were shared between regions to encourage improved service.

A major initiative launched in 2000 – 2001 was the development of a new computerized case-management and information system that will provide additional tools to manage caseloads efficiently, including the ability to provide enhanced operational reports. Significant staff resources were used in the second half of the year to support the development of the system, which is expected to continue through the fall of 2001.While the development of this new system has affected overall caseload performance in the short term, the new system will help increase efficiency in the long term.

Commissioners completed a comprehensive Policy and Procedures manual to guide them in undertaking panel hearings. The manual is also available on line for access by parties appearing before a panel. Printed copies can also be requested. The Commissioners plan to complete a comprehensive code of conduct next fiscal year, and orientation materials for parties appearing before panel are also under development. These documents will assist in ensuring consistency, efficiency, transparency and accountability in all aspects of panel hearings.

Education services

Education and the promotion of human rights are core functions of the Commission. The Commission's major initiative in 2000 – 2001 was the hosting of the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies annual conference in Banff, in May 2000. The conference, *Building a human rights culture: Tools for transformation/Faire des droits de la personne un mode de vie: les outils de transformation* was held as a forum to discuss successful strategies and tools for building a human rights culture. The conference was the largest CASHRA conference held, with almost 300 participants attending from across Canada. A volunteer steering committee guided conference development and significant public, not-for-profit and private sector financial support was received.

One of the yearly highlights promoting human rights is the celebration marking International Human Rights Day on December 10th. Approximately 300 people gathered at Calgary's City Hall in December to celebrate International Human Rights Day and to recognize the Human Rights Award and Suzanne Mah Award recipients for 2000.

The Commission continued to increase awareness and understanding of human rights by developing new information and educational materials, by delivering workshops and presentations on Alberta's human rights, through displays, and through its web site, which continued to be an important information source for Albertans. Reviewing proposed human rights policies for organizations helped build more inclusive, non-discriminatory environments. Staff participated in community liaison and development work to support organizations and communities in their work related to human rights and diversity.

The Commission focused on increasing understanding of human rights issues in the workplace in order to build more inclusive workplaces and reduce workplace discrimination. It launched several initiatives, including a survey of Alberta employers on human rights in the workplace. It also cooperated with other Canadian federal, provincial, and territorial human rights commissions on joint educational initiatives in this area. Research was undertaken on the business reasons for adopting human rights policies and practices in the workplace, and a poster promoting a shared responsibility for human rights in the workplace was developed. Other initiatives related to eliminating discrimination in the workplace are under development and scheduled for completion in the next fiscal year.

The Commission's interest in promoting human rights and diversity education is shared with other organizations, including the Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund. The Education Fund provides financial assistance to various organizations, as well as to the Commission for its educational programs, and the Chief Commissioner serves as vice-chair of the Education Fund Advisory Committee.

Part I: Complaint resolution and settlement process provided by the regional offices and Director's office

Overview of the complaint resolution and settlement process

Inquiries and information

The Commission provides information on a confidential and free-of-charge basis to people who believe they may have experienced discrimination in Alberta, who are responding to a human rights issue, or who are seeking more information about human rights in Alberta. Commission staff provide information, not legal advice, and remain impartial on all inquiries. Those bringing an inquiry to the Commission are able to consult with a human rights officer who can suggest what they might do to try to resolve the situation. People bringing inquiries to the Commission that are outside its mandate are referred to other agencies. Inquiries come from a broad spectrum of people including employers, landlords, educators and people who believe they have been discriminated against in some way.

Submitting a human rights complaint

If an individual's efforts fail to resolve a situation where they believe they experienced discrimination, and they wish the Commission to become directly involved, they may submit a human rights complaint. A complainant has the legal obligation of showing reasonable grounds for believing that discrimination has occurred and must submit the complaint within one year of the alleged incident.

Determining whether to accept a human rights complaint

Commission staff review human rights complaints to determine if they may be accepted. Complaints need to fall within the Commission's jurisdiction, be made within one year of the alleged incident of discrimination, and demonstrate reasonable grounds. A third party may make a complaint on behalf of another individual with that person's consent.

Next steps

If the Commission accepts the complaint, then the party being complained about, the respondent, is asked to respond to the complaint. Their response is then shared with the person who made the complaint, the complainant.

Two methods for resolving human rights complaints

When the Commission accepts a human rights complaint, two methods are used to resolve the matter. The first is conciliation; the second is investigation.

Conciliation

After the complaint has been filed, the case is assigned to a conciliator, who attempts to resolve the complaint by assisting the parties to determine a mutually acceptable solution. Conciliation is a voluntary, non-adversarial approach to resolving disputes in which an impartial person, known as a conciliator, helps the complainant and the respondent (the parties in the dispute) to identify the issues, discuss the factors surrounding these issues and generate possible solutions. The objective of conciliation is to reach a resolution that is acceptable to both parties without an investigation.

During conciliation, it is the parties themselves who make any decisions to resolve the dispute. The conciliator simply helps them understand the issues and come to a mutually acceptable solution. The conciliator remains impartial during the process and does not judge the issues. The conciliator does not have the authority to impose any solution or decision on the parties. The Commission recognizes the rights of both parties to the complaint and, during conciliation, does not act on behalf of either party. The conciliator also helps the parties prepare a written agreement.

Conciliation is often successful because it leads to understanding between the parties. The decision about how to resolve the complaint is made jointly by both parties who share ownership of the decision and respect the outcome. To ensure the parties are as forthright as possible, all discussions and information supplied by the parties are on a without prejudice basis. The Commission informs the parties that the information is not to be used for any purpose other than the conciliation. If conciliation is successful, the file is closed. If the complaint proceeds to an investigation, information arising during the conciliation is not used during the Commission's investigation.

Investigating human rights complaints

If conciliation is unsuccessful or declined by either party, the complaint is assigned to an investigator. Investigation is the impartial collection and examination of facts about the complaint by an investigator. The investigator will investigate the complaint, and analyze the evidence in relation to human rights law. During the investigation of a complaint the parties are encouraged to provide any evidence they believe is important to a decision on whether or not there has been discrimination. At any time during the investigation, Commission staff will try to help the parties reach a settlement if they request assistance. The objective of investigation is to determine whether discrimination occurred.

If the evidence supports a finding that there has been discrimination and there is no legal defense for the discrimination, the complaint is described as having merit. At this point in most complaints a written investigation report that includes a recommended remedy is shared with the parties.

If the evidence shows there is no merit to the complaint, then the investigator recommends that the Director dismiss the complaint. The complainant may appeal a decision by the Director to dismiss the complaint to the Chief Commissioner.

Settling a human rights complaint where merit is found

When a complaint has merit, Commission staff work with the parties to attempt to settle the complaint by securing a remedy for the complainant. Remedies may include financial and non-financial compensation for actual losses and/or suffering that occurred as a result of discrimination.

The objective of a remedy is to restore the complainant to the position he or she would have been in if the discrimination had not occurred. It is not the purpose of the Act to punish anyone. Recommended remedies are based on Canadian and Alberta legal precedents in human rights cases.

The Commission is responsible for addressing the interests of both the individual and the public when recommending a remedy. For example, if a complainant has lost his or her job because of racial discrimination, the individual's interests may be addressed if the recommended remedy called on the employer to do one or more of the following:

- provide an apology to the complainant;
- provide a job reference for the complainant;
- commit to not repeating the behaviour or ensuring the behaviour will not reoccur in the workplace;
- re-instate the complainant to his or her former job;
- make financial compensation to the complainant for lost income; and
- make financial compensation for injury to dignity, pain and suffering or humiliation and embarrassment.

The public interest may be addressed if the recommended remedy called on the employer to:

- have an education session on human rights;
- introduce a non-discrimination policy into the workplace;
- stop a behaviour or practice found to be discriminatory.

Complainants have a responsibility to minimize (mitigate) the losses they experienced through discrimination. For example, complainants have a responsibility to look for work and accept work if they lost a job as a result of discrimination.

The nature of the discrimination influences the recommended remedy. Each complaint remedy is assessed individually.

Dismissing or discontinuing a complaint

The Director dismisses a complaint when no merit is found.

The Director may discontinue a complaint with merit if the Director is of the opinion that the person making the complaint has refused to accept a proposed settlement offered by the respondent that is fair and reasonable.

In both cases, where the Director dismisses or discontinues a complaint, the complainant can request that the Chief Commissioner review the Director's decision. This request must be made within 30 days of receiving the Director's decision. See "Appeals to the Chief Commissioner" on page 26 for more information.

Withdrawn or abandoned complaints

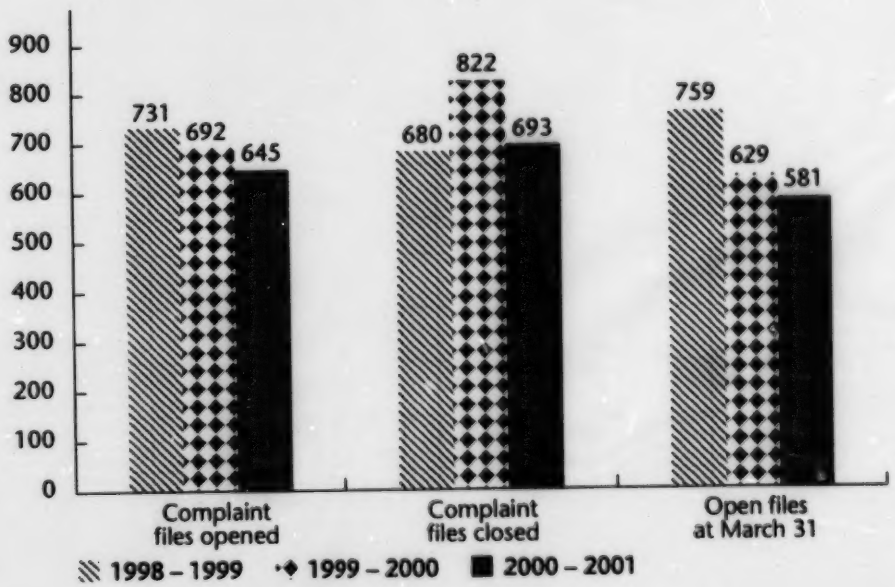
Complainants may withdraw their complaints when they believe there is no merit, or when they settle the dispute in another forum such as a grievance procedure or civil court action and withdrawal of the human rights complaint is part of the settlement agreement. When a complainant fails to maintain contact with the Commission, for whatever reason, their file is considered "abandoned." A complainant may end the complaint process at any step.

2001 – 2002 Results

Complaint files opened and closed

In the fiscal year April 1, 2000, through March 31, 2001, the Commission received an estimated 45,000 phone calls. Commission staff assist callers by providing information about human rights issues, offering suggestions on steps they can take to resolve the matter themselves, providing suggestions on how to avoid discrimination, providing guidance on how to complete a human rights complaint form, sending them printed information, and referring them to the Commission web site. When inquiries are outside the Commission's mandate, staff refer callers to other agencies. By the end of the fiscal year, the Commission opened 645 complaint files, 47 files less than in the previous year.

Complaint files opened and closed and in the system in 1998 – 1999, 1999 – 2000 and 2000 – 2001



Grounds of discrimination in complaint files opened

Complainants can allege discrimination on one or more grounds. A total of 897 grounds were cited in the 645 complaint files opened in 2000 – 2001, continuing an apparent trend where an increasing number of complainants allege discrimination on more than one ground. In 1999 – 2000, a total of 896 grounds were cited in the 692 complaint files opened, and 981 grounds were cited in the 731 complaint files opened in 1998 – 1999.

The following table shows the distribution of grounds, the distribution of complaints opened that cite various grounds of discrimination and each ground as a percentage of the total number of grounds cited for 2000 – 2001.

Physical disability and gender continued as the top two grounds most frequently and almost equally cited (physical disability was cited one more time than gender). This was similar to 1999 – 2000 and 1998 – 1999. In 2000 – 2001, the third most frequently cited ground was mental disability, followed closely behind by race/colour. This reverses the order in 1998 – 99 and 1999 – 2000, where race/colour were third, and mental disability fourth in frequency of being cited.

Two different percentage calculations are presented in the table:

- The column titled *Percentage of files opened that cite ground* is calculated using the total number of complaint files opened in the fiscal year in question. For example, 253 of the 645 complaint files opened in 2000 – 2001 cite the ground of physical disability. Therefore, 39% of the complaint files opened cite the ground of physical disability (253 divided by 645 times 100% = 39%).
- The column titled *Ground as a percentage of total number of grounds cited* is calculated using the total number of grounds cited in the fiscal year in question. For example, 253 of the 897 grounds cited in 2000 – 2001 were physical disability. Therefore, 28% of the total number of grounds cited were physical disability (253 divided by 897 times 100% = 28%).

Grounds cited in complaint files opened in 2000 – 2001

Ground	Number of times ground cited	Percentage of files opened that cite ground 645 files	Ground as a percentage of total number of grounds cited 897 grounds
Gender**	252	39%	28%
Physical Disability	253	39%	28%
Mental Disabiltiy	90	14%	10%
Race/Colour	87	13%	10%
Ancestry/Origin	71	11%	8%
Age	49	8%	5%
Family Status	29	4%	3%
Religious Beliefs	17	3%	2%
Marital Status	24	4%	3%
Sexual Orientation	19	3%	2%
Source of Income	6	1%	1%
Other	0	0%	0%
Totals	897	139%*	100%

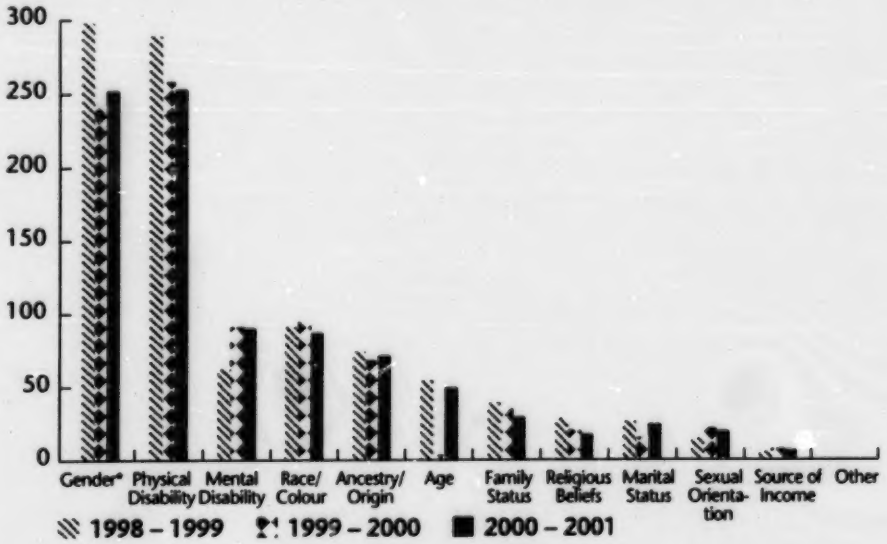
* Totals more than 100% because multiple grounds are cited in some of the files.
** The figures for percentage of files opened that cite the ground of gender are likely overstated. This is because more than one of the sub-grounds for gender is likely cited in some of the files. For example, some files contain the sub-ground of "gender-pregnancy" as well as the sub-ground of "gender-sexual harassment". However the computerized case management system is not able to track and account for these files as sub-grounds and instead counts them as separate grounds.

Additional Notes:

- The percentages in the *Percentage of files opened that cite ground* column cannot be added together. For example, the 39% for physical disability files cannot be added to the 14% for the mental disability files to say that 53% of the files opened cite either the ground of physical disability or mental disability. This is because it is not uncommon for complaint files to cite both physical disability and mental disability as grounds. The computerized case management system is unable to report on where any overlap occurs where files cite multiple grounds.
- It is possible to add the percentages in the column titled *Ground as a percentage of total number of grounds cited*. For example, it is accurate to say that 38% of the total grounds cited in 2000 – 2001 were either physical disability or mental disability. This percentage is obtained by adding 28% for physical disability and 10% for mental disability.

The following chart shows the distribution of grounds cited for the fiscal years 1998 – 1999, 1999 – 2000 and 2000 – 2001.

Number of grounds cited in files opened in selected years



* The figures for percentage of files opened that cite the ground of gender are likely overstated. This is because more than one of the sub-grounds for gender is likely cited in some of the files. For example, some files contain the sub-ground of "gender-pregnancy" as well as the sub-ground of "gender-sexual harassment." However the computerized case management system is not able to track and account for these files as sub-grounds and instead counts them as separate grounds.

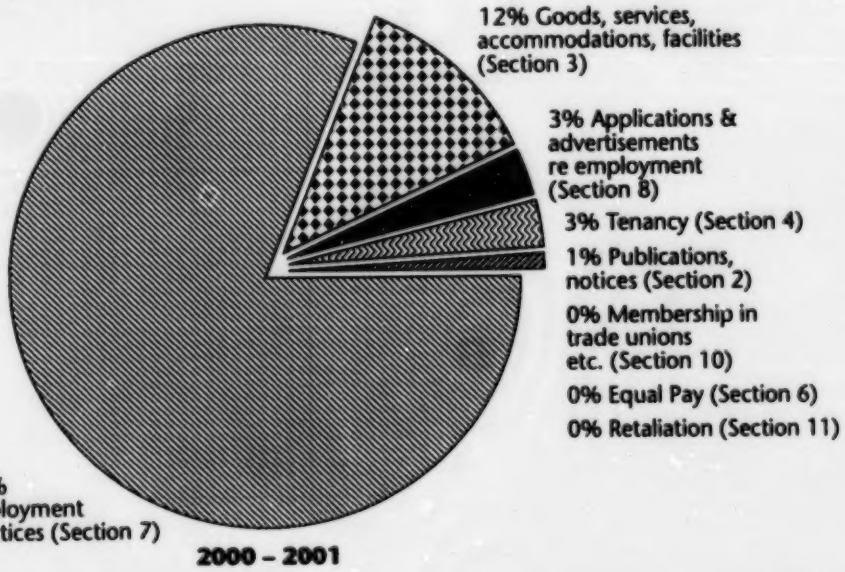
Sections of the Act cited in complaint files opened

The percentage of complaints citing different areas or sections of the Act where discrimination is prohibited has remained relatively consistent over the past three years. Of the 897 grounds cited in complaints made in 2000 – 2001, the majority (81 per cent) cited section 7, the area of employment practices. The second-most commonly cited section was section 3, publicly available good, services, accommodation and facilities, which was cited in 12 per cent of the grounds. This continues a pattern seen in previous years.

The area of tenancy and the area of employment advertisements were each cited in three per cent of the grounds. The other areas were each cited in one percent or less than one percent of the grounds.

The following pie chart provides information on the percentage of complaint grounds cited in different sections of the Act.

Percentage of complaint grounds cited by section in 2000 – 2001


12% Goods, services, accommodations, facilities (Section 3)
3% Applications & advertisements re employment (Section 8)
3% Tenancy (Section 4)
1% Publications, notices (Section 2)
0% Membership in trade unions etc. (Section 10)
0% Equal Pay (Section 6)
0% Retaliation (Section 11)
81% Employment practices (Section 7)
2000 – 2001

Notes: This pie chart provides information on the percentage of complaint grounds cited under different sections of the Act. The graph is based on the total number of grounds cited, not the number of complaint files opened. For example, of the 897 grounds cited in 2000 – 2001, 723 grounds or 81% of the total number of grounds cited were in the area of employment (section 7).

Disposition of closed complaint files

The Commission closed 693 complaint files in 2000 – 2001. The vast majority of complaints — 662 files (96 per cent) — were dealt with through the commission's compliance process, meaning they were settled by the parties through conciliation or investigation, dismissed or discontinued by the director, or withdrawn or abandoned by the complainant. The remaining four per cent of files were handled through the Commission's panel process, and are discussed in Part II.

In the past three years, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of files that closed through the conciliation and investigation services provided by Commission staff. In 2000 – 2001, 67% of files closed through these two processes, as compared to 60% of files in 1999 – 2000, and 55% of files in 1998 – 1999.

Conciliated files

The majority of complaint files were resolved by the parties with the help of a conciliator provided by the commission. In 2000 – 2001, 54% of the complaints (376 files) were resolved through conciliation, as compared to the forty-eight percent of the complaints that resolved through conciliation in 1999 – 2000, and forty-four percent that resolved through conciliation in 1998 – 1999. Conciliation is a voluntary, non-adversarial way of resolving disputes. The conciliator is an impartial person who works with the complainant and respondent to generate possible solutions to the complaint.

Investigated files

The parties settled 13% of the complaints (88 files) through investigation. This compares to twelve per cent of the complaint files that settled through investigation in 1999 – 2000. If conciliation does not resolve the complaint, commission staff conduct an investigation to establish the facts of the case and determine whether or not there is merit to the complaint. If the investigator believes there is merit to the case, commission staff try again to help the parties reach a settlement.

Dismissed files

In 2000 – 2001, the director dismissed 91 complaint files because the complaints were found to have no merit, that is, there was no discrimination as defined by the *Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act*. Or, if there was discrimination, it was reasonable and justifiable under the circumstances.

When a complainant does not agree with the director's decision, they may appeal the decision to the chief commissioner. In 2000 – 2001, 62 of the files closed as "dismissed" were not appealed. However,

complainants did appeal 29 decisions. The chief commissioner upheld 21 of the decisions; thus those 21 files were closed as "dismissed." In total, 83 files (12%) were closed as dismissed. The chief commissioner overturned 8 of the 91 dismissal decisions and those files remained open and proceeded to panel.

Discontinued files

The director may discontinue a complaint that has merit, if she believes the complainant has refused to accept a settlement offered by the respondent that is fair and reasonable. In 2000 – 2001, the director discontinued two files. In both cases, the complainants appealed the director's decision to the chief commissioner. The chief commissioner upheld one discontinuance and overturned the other. Thus, one of the files (less than one percent) that was originally discontinued by the director closed as discontinued, and the other remained open and proceeded to a panel hearing.

Withdrawn or abandoned files

There has been a significant decrease in the both the overall number and percentage of withdrawn or abandoned files from 1998 – 99 through to 2000 – 2001. In 2000 – 2001, 16% of complaint files (114 files) were either withdrawn or abandoned by complainants, as compared to 20% of the complaint files (164 files) in 1999 – 2000 and 34% of the complaint files (230 files) in 1998 – 1999.

In 2000 – 2001, the majority of these (83 files) were withdrawn. Complainants typically withdraw their complaints when they agree there is no merit to their complaint. Another reason for withdrawal is that the complainant has settled the dispute in another forum such as a grievance procedure or civil court action and withdrawal of the human rights complaint is part of the settlement agreement. The Commission considers a file to be abandoned when, for whatever reason, the complainant decides not to maintain contact with the Commission. Complainants abandoned thirty-one files in 2000 – 2001.

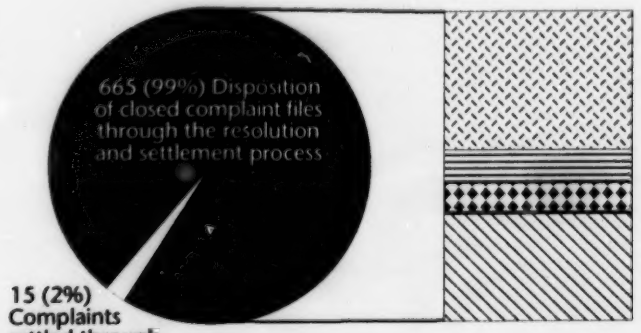
The following pie charts show how complaint files were closed through the Commission's resolution and settlement process in 1998 – 1999, 1999 – 2000 and 2000 – 2001.

Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission

Annual Review 2000 – 2001

Disposition of closed complaint files in 1998 – 1999, 1999 – 2000 and 2000 – 2001 through the Commission's resolution and settlement process

*Complaints closed through the human rights panel process are discussed in Part II of this report


665 (99%) Disposition of closed complaint files through the resolution and settlement process
15 (2%) Complaints settled through the human rights panel process*

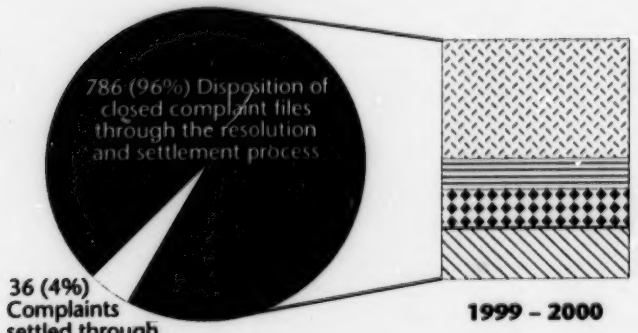
296 (44%) Resolved through conciliation

73 (11%) Settled through investigation
60 (9%) Dismissed
6 (1%) Discontinued

230 (34%) Withdrawn or abandoned by complainant

1998 – 1999

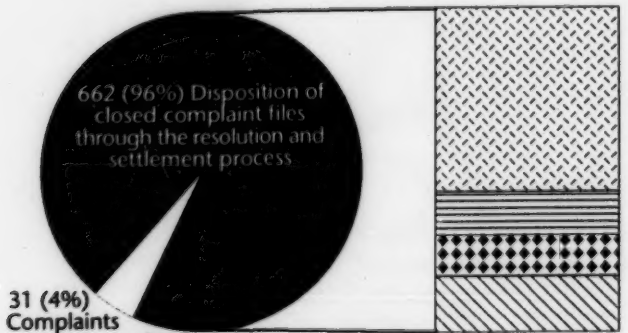
Totals more than 100% due to rounding.


786 (96%) Disposition of closed complaint files through the resolution and settlement process
36 (4%) Complaints settled through the human rights panel process*

392 (48%) Resolved through conciliation

100 (12%) Settled through investigation
125 (15%) Dismissed
5 (1%) Discontinued
164 (20%) Withdrawn or abandoned by complainant

1999 – 2000


662 (96%) Disposition of closed complaint files through the resolution and settlement process
31 (4%) Complaints settled through the human rights panel process*

376 (54%) Resolved through conciliation

88 (13%) Settled through investigation
83 (12%) Dismissed
1 (0%) Discontinued
114 (16%) Withdrawn or abandoned by complainant

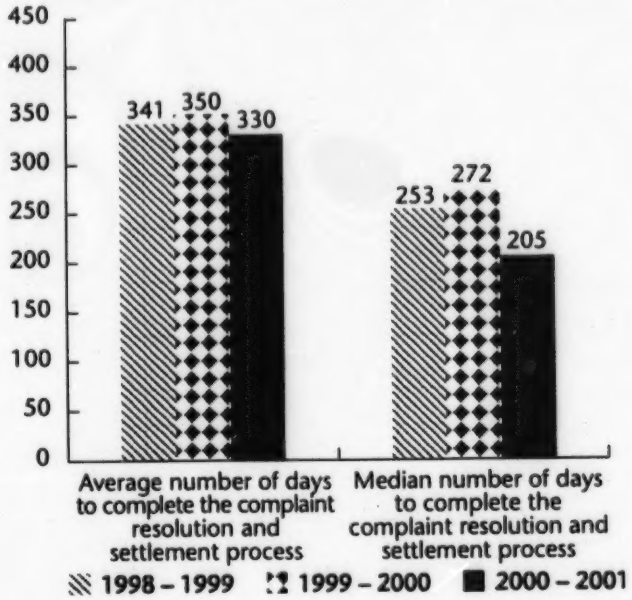
2000 – 2001

Time frame for closed complaints

The Commission's performance target for completing the complaint resolution and settlement process provided by the regional offices and Director's office is a maximum of 435 days from the day the complaint is accepted. Included in this target is the time it took for each file to be settled by the parties at the conciliation or investigation stage, dismissed or discontinued by the Director, withdrawn or abandoned by the complainant, or forwarded by the Director to the Chief Commissioner for a panel hearing.

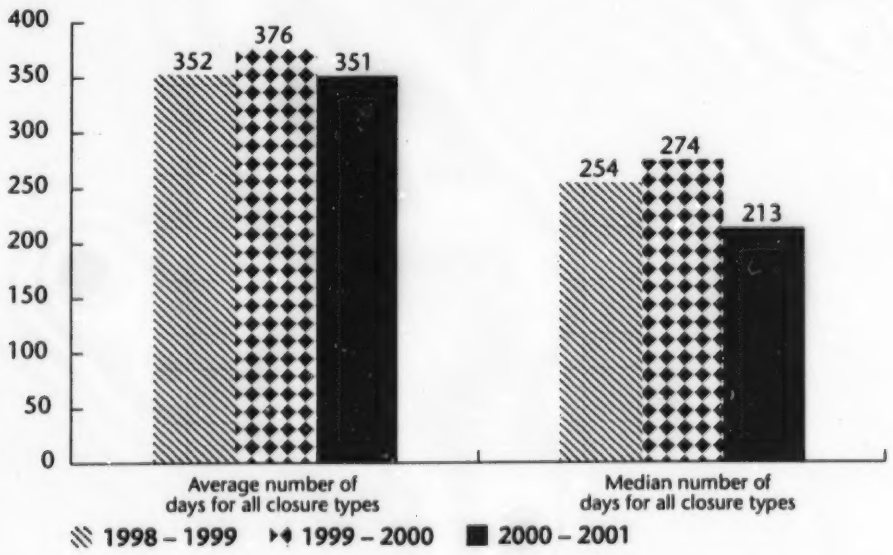
The files that closed in 2000 – 2001 were closed in less time on average than in the previous two years. The average time it took to complete the complaint resolution and settlement process provided by the regional offices and Director's office was 330 days. The median time was 205 days. The Commission met its performance target of completing this process within a maximum of 435 days for 488 of the 693 files that closed, or in 70 percent of the cases.

Average and median number of days to complete the complaint resolution and settlement process provided by the regional offices and Director's office for files that closed in 1998 – 1999, 1999 – 2000 and 2000 – 2001



Some files go through the review and panel processes provided by the Chief Commissioner and Commissioners. If the time it took to complete the review and panel process is added to the time it took to complete the complaint resolution and settlement process provided by the regional offices and Director's office, the above time lines increase somewhat as shown in the following table.

Average and median number of days for all closure types for files that closed in 1998 – 1999, 1999 – 2000 and 2000 – 2001



Part II: Appeals to the Chief Commissioner and the human rights panel process

The Commissioners

In 2000 – 2001 the Chief Commissioner was Charlach Mackintosh. There were six part-time Commissioners:

- Lori Andreachuk, Q.C.
- William P. Baergen, Ph.D.
- Beth Bryant
- Diane Marie Colley-Urquhart
- Deborah Prowse
- Helen Rice

All Commissioners are appointed by Order in Council. For more information on the Commissioners and their terms of appointment consult the Commission's web site at www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca or contact any Commission office.

Overview of the referral, appeal and panel processes

Referral to the Chief Commissioner when parties are unable to settle a complaint with merit

When parties are unable to settle a complaint that the Director believes has merit, the Director reports this to the Chief Commissioner. The Chief Commissioner then appoints a Human Rights Panel to adjudicate the case.

Appeals to the Chief Commissioner

If the Director dismisses or discontinues a complaint, the complainant may appeal by writing to the Chief Commissioner within 30 days of receiving the Director's decision. The Chief Commissioner conducts a documentary review of the file, investigation report, and information from the parties. If the Chief Commissioner decides that the complaint should not have been dismissed or that the proposed settlement was not fair and reasonable, he appoints a human rights panel to decide the matter. If he decides that the complaint should have been dismissed or that the proposed settlement was fair and reasonable, he denies the appeal.

The Chief Commissioner's decision on the appeal is final and binding on the parties, although it is subject to judicial review by the Court of Queen's Bench. A judicial review is a review of the process used in making the decision. A judicial review must be requested within six months of receiving the Chief Commissioner's decision.

Human rights panels

Human rights panels are administrative tribunals that are appointed by the Chief Commissioner. Panels deal with complaints where the Chief Commissioner receives a report from the Director that the parties are unable to settle a complaint where merit has been found, or where the Chief Commissioner decides that a complaint should not have been dismissed or discontinued by the Director.

The Chief Commissioner appoints one or three Commissioners to sit as the panel. The panel receives submissions from the parties and hears evidence about the situation that resulted in a complaint being filed. After hearing the evidence, the panel makes a decision about whether or not the complaint has merit. If the panel decides that the complaint has merit, the panel orders a remedy. If the panel finds that the complaint is without merit, then it will dismiss the complaint.

Where the panel finds that the complaint has merit, it will order a remedy that may include one or more of the following:

- stops the discrimination that the complaint is about;
- stops the respondent from contravening the Act in the same or any similar manner in the future;
- provides the complainant with the rights, opportunities or privileges that were denied because of the discrimination;
- compensates the complainant for any lost wages, income or expenses because of the discrimination;
- or any other action that the panel decides would place the person discriminated against in the position they would have been if the discrimination had not occurred. This might include, for example, ordering the respondent to pay the complainant damages or ordering the respondent to implement new policies.

The panel can also make an order concerning costs.

All parties receive the panel's decision. The decision is also filed with the Court of Queen's Bench. Once filed with the Court of Queen's bench, a panel decision has the same force and effect as a court decision. Either the complainant or respondent can appeal the panel's decision to the Court of Queen's Bench within 30 days of receiving the decision.

2001 – 2002 Results

Appeals reviewed by Chief Commissioner

In 2000 – 2001 the Chief Commissioner completed reviews on 31 files. This compares to 57 files he reviewed in 1999 – 2000. The larger number of files reviewed in 1999 – 2000 is due to the larger total number of files closed in that year. The Chief Commissioner's decisions are summarized in the tables below.

Appeals reviewed by the Chief Commissioner in 2000 – 2001

Type of appeal	Number of decisions upheld	Number of decisions overturned	Total number of appeals
Dismissal	21	8	29
Discontinuance	1	1	2
Totals	22	9	31

Appeals reviewed by the Chief Commissioner in 1999 – 2000

Type of appeal	Number of decisions upheld	Number of decisions overturned	Total number of appeals
Dismissal	46	7	53
Discontinuance	3	1	4
Totals	49	8	57

Appeals reviewed by the Chief Commissioner in 1998 – 1999

Type of appeal	Number of decisions upheld	Number of decisions overturned	Total number of appeals
Dismissal	23	9	31
Discontinuance	3	7	10
Totals	25	16	41

Disposition of complaints scheduled for or heard by panels

Four per cent of the files that closed in 2000 – 2001 (31 files) were dealt with through the panel process, the same percentage of files that closed through the panel process in 1999 – 2000. The director refers complaints to a panel when she believes there is merit to the complaint but the complainant and respondent are unable to settle. The chief commissioner refers complaints to a panel when he believes a complaint can only properly be decided through a human rights panel and should not have been dismissed or discontinued by the director. The panel process is independent from the work of Commission staff in receiving and resolving complaints. Human rights panels are composed of human rights Commissioners and are appointed by the Chief Commissioner.

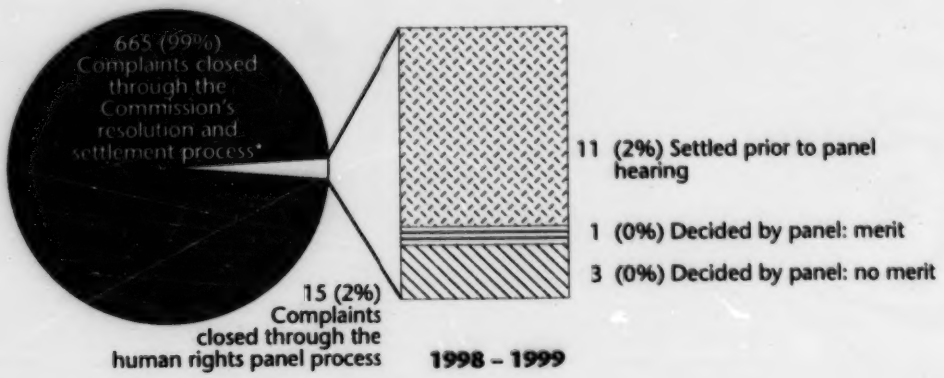
The 31 complaints that closed after being referred to panel had the following outcomes:

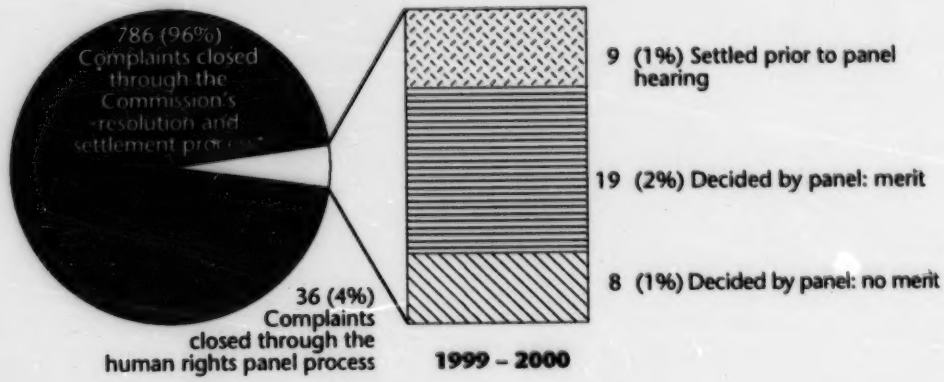
- Parties settled 17 files prior to the panel hearing, usually with the assistance of Commission staff.
- Two files went through a panel hearing where the panel found merit to the complaints and ordered an appropriate remedy.
- Four files went through a panel hearing where the panel found no merit and dismissed the complaints.
- 2000 – 2001 was the first year in which panels made decisions on the preliminary matter of the validity of severance agreements. In six files, the panel decided that the severance agreements were valid and enforceable, and the files were closed. (Note: In two other cases, panels decided that the severance agreements were not valid and enforceable and therefore sent the files back to the director to resume the regular Commission compliance process.)
- Two files were closed due to other circumstances and were not heard by a panel. In one case, the complainant withdrew the complaint. In the other case, the Court of Queen's Bench overturned the chief commissioner's decision to send the complaint to panel. The complainant and the Commission have appealed the Court of Queen's Bench decision.

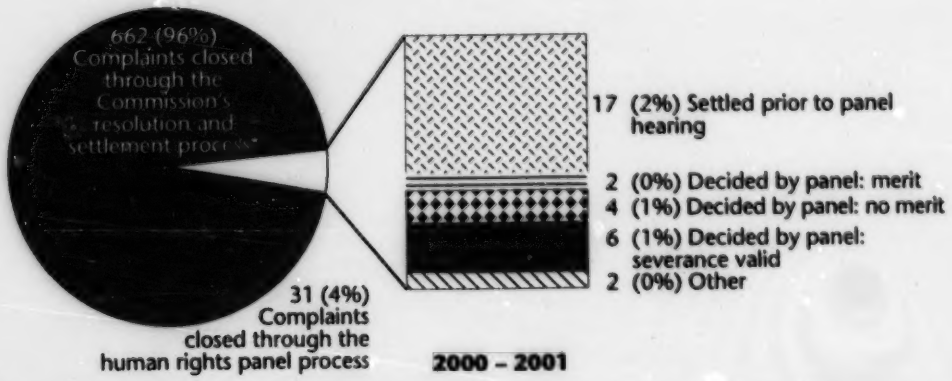
The following pie charts show how complaint files were closed through the human rights panel process in 1998 – 1999, 1999 – 2000 and 2000 – 2001.

Disposition of closed complaint files in 1998 – 1999, 1999 – 2000 and 2000 – 2001 through the human rights panel process

*Complaints closed through the resolution and settlement services provided by the regional offices and Director's office are discussed in Part I of this report.


665 (99%) Complaints closed through the Commission's resolution and settlement process*
15 (2%) Complaints closed through the human rights panel process
11 (2%) Settled prior to panel hearing
1 (0%) Decided by panel: merit
3 (0%) Decided by panel: no merit
1998 – 1999


786 (96%) Complaints closed through the Commission's resolution and settlement process*
36 (4%) Complaints closed through the human rights panel process
9 (1%) Settled prior to panel hearing
19 (2%) Decided by panel: merit
8 (1%) Decided by panel: no merit
1999 – 2000


662 (96%) Complaints closed through the Commission's resolution and settlement process*
31 (4%) Complaints closed through the human rights panel process
17 (2%) Settled prior to panel hearing
2 (0%) Decided by panel: merit
4 (1%) Decided by panel: no merit
6 (1%) Decided by panel: severance valid
2 (0%) Other
2000 – 2001

Panel decisions 2000 – 2001

Complete decisions are found on the Commission's web site or are available on request directly from the Commission. Summaries of the panel decisions are provided below. Panel summaries of six severance files and one preliminary matter are available from the Commission.

Debra Elliott v. Auto Stop Car Wash (1996) Ltd.
Decision: June 23, 2000
Area — employment, **Ground** — gender/pregnancy,
Decision — no merit.

The complainant, Debra Elliott, filed a complaint against Auto Stop Car Wash (1996) Ltd., alleging discrimination in the area of employment on the ground of gender/pregnancy. The complainant was employed as an assistant manager of a car wash for over one year. She informed her manager that she was pregnant and was terminated two weeks later. The complaint was referred to a human rights panel because the parties were not able to settle. The panel found that the complainant was released from her position because of performance issues, not because of her pregnancy. The panel dismissed the complaint.

Patti Orth v. Diner's Spot Restaurant and Theodoros Kourletis
Decision: August 16, 2000
Area — employment, **Ground** — gender/pregnancy,
Decision — merit found/damages awarded.

The complainant, Patti Orth, began her employment as a waitress at Diner's Spot Restaurant on June 6, 1994. Ms. Orth discovered she was pregnant on September 5, 1994 and informed her supervisor the next day. On January 13, 1995, her supervisor told her that she was laid off due to a shortage of work. On January 14, 1995, the schedule at the restaurant included the name of a waitress unknown to the complainant. She was scheduled to work the shifts previously assigned to Ms. Orth. The respondent indicated the complainant was laid off because of poor work performance and violation of the dress code. The complaint was referred to a human rights panel because the parties were not able to settle. The panel found that the pregnancy of the complainant was a causative factor in her dismissal. The panel ordered the respondent to pay compensation for lost wages and benefits as well as compensation for lost tips.

Barry Bingham v. Magnum Cat Contractors Ltd.
Decision: Nov. 17, 2000
Area — employment, **Ground** — physical disability,
Decision — no merit.

The complainant, Barry Bingham, was employed with Magnum Cat Contractors Ltd. as an operator from February 15, 1998 to February 19, 1998. Mr. Bingham alleged his employment was terminated because of his speech and gait impediments. The respondent denied that there was discrimination on the ground of physical disability. He stated that the complainant was a temporary operator replacing one of the regular operators who was on holidays. The respondent indicated that the general contractor had requested that Mr. Bingham be replaced because of his approach to supervising the men and the equipment. The complaint was referred to a human rights panel. The panel did not find evidence of discrimination on the ground of physical disability. It was the decision of the panel that Mr. Bingham was terminated because of his work habits. The panel dismissed the complaint.

Jean Chartrand v. Vanderwell Contractors (1971) Ltd.
Decision: Jan. 17, 2001
Area — employment, **Ground** — gender/sexual harassment,
Decision — merit found/damages awarded. The respondent filed an appeal to the Court of Queen's Bench, which was dismissed by the Court in July 2001.

The complainant, Jean Chartrand, was employed with Vanderwell Contractors Ltd. in their planer mill for three years. Ms. Chartrand terminated her employment because she believed her shift supervisor sexually harassed her. The complainant alleged she had been touched inappropriately and that the shift supervisor had made sexually offensive remarks, which the complainant responded to negatively. The respondent denied these allegations. The complaint was referred to a human rights panel. The panel found that the complainant was discriminated against in the workplace because of her gender. This discrimination took the form of sexual harassment by the respondent and was the reason the complainant left her employment. The remedy set out by the panel included an amount for lost wages, injury to dignity and self-respect, and the cost of legal fees.

Sidney Greenwood v. Workers' Compensation Board
Decision: January 30, 2001
Area — services, **Grounds** — mental and physical disability, **Decision** — no merit.

The complainant, Sidney Greenwood, filed a complaint with the Commission, alleging that the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) discriminated against him based on mental and physical disability in the area of services. An investigation by the Commission concluded that the WCB had discriminated against Mr. Greenwood by failing to consider appropriate medical evidence, failing to apply certain policies fairly, and failing to consider chronic fatigue as a disability.

The WCB challenged the jurisdiction of the Commission even to investigate, stating that the matter was res judicata (a matter judicially acted upon or decided) as it had already been heard by the WCB. The WCB also stated that the matter was statute barred as Mr. Greenwood's complaint was laid more than six months after the decisions of the Claim Services Review Committee and the Appeals Commission. (Six months was the limitation period under the Commission's previous legislation, the *Individual's Rights Protection Act*).

In keeping with the provisions of Section 27 of the Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act, the panel requested the opinion of Court of Queen's Bench on two questions of law related to the matters raised by WCB.

The Court's opinion on the first question of law was that Mr. Greenwood's complaint was not res judicata as before the Commission and the questions asked by the WCB and the Commission were "two quite different matters."

However, the Court of Queen's Bench stated that the Commission does not have jurisdiction, based on the investigator's report, to appoint a panel to hear allegations of discrimination against Mr. Greenwood. The Court emphasized that the report did not find any comparative group to be able to compare Mr. Greenwood's treatment by the WCB to a member of such a group. In other words, when evaluating the actual decision of the WCB regarding benefits, the Commission cannot just argue that the decision was wrong because the WCB relied on the wrong medical advice. The decision of the WCB has to be discriminatory when compared to another group. For the Commission to find merit in the complaint, any difference in how the individuals were treated by the WCB has to be because of group differences and not individual differences. On the second question of law, the Court concluded that Mr. Greenwood's complaint was out of time.

To view the opinion of Court of Queen's Bench, go to **www.albertacourts.ab.ca/webpage/isys/judgment_search-menu_based.htm** and type in Greenwood, then select "OK."

Upon receiving and considering the Court's opinion, the panel dismissed the complaint as the panel was without jurisdiction to hear it.

Part III: Education services

Recognizing Albertans for their achievements in human rights and celebrating International Human Rights Day

Approximately 300 people gathered at Calgary's City Hall on December 7, 2000, to celebrate International Human Rights Day and to recognize the Human Rights Awards recipients for 2000. The Chief Commissioner, Charlach Mackintosh, and the Mayor of the City of Calgary, His Worship Mayor Al Deurr hosted the event. The theme of the ceremony was "Peace through Respect and Dignity for All," in recognition of the International Year for a Culture of Peace.

The Alberta Human Rights Award is presented to an individual or organization for outstanding effort, achievement and leadership in enhancing and promoting human rights in Alberta. The 2000 award went to Edmonton resident James B. Hunter for his work with human rights related to mental disability.

The Suzanne Mah Award honours a member (or members) of the legal profession in Alberta who exemplify human rights principles, ideals and leadership in the practice or teaching of law. The 2000 award went to Michael I. Wylie, Dean of Law at the University of Calgary

The awards program was improved in 2000 – 2001 through the development of more comprehensive criteria for the Commission's human rights awards, increased promotion of the awards, a more comprehensive and educational program for the event, and a more collaborative approach to planning the event.

The Human Rights Day Kit was available to assist organizations, schools and communities with their planning of Human Rights Day 2000 celebrations. In addition to the Calgary event, the Commission participated in Human Rights Day celebrations in Edmonton and Grande Prairie.

National Human Rights Conference

In 2000 – 2001, Chief Commissioner Mackintosh served as the President of the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies (CASHRA). Alberta's Commission hosted CASHRA's annual conference, the association's major yearly educational initiative. The conference was a major undertaking for the commission, the Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund and Alberta Community Development. The national conference, *Building a Human Rights Culture: Tools for Transformation,* was developed on an education

theme. It began with a pre-conference seminar on Saturday May 6th, and took place Sunday May 7 through Tuesday May 9, 2000. The conference exceeded its registration target, with almost 300 individuals participating, making it the best-attended CASHRA conference held.

Participants evaluated the conference positively. They reported that the conference met its objectives of providing opportunities to share ideas on how a human rights culture can be built through activities in different sectors of society and increased participant knowledge and understanding of human rights and diversity. Participants reported they formed new networks, and were able to apply the knowledge and understanding gained through the conference directly to their work and interests in these areas. The conference also helped promote a better understanding within Alberta and Canada of the significant positive work Alberta is doing to protect human rights and promote fairness and access.

This conference was part of the long-term work of improving the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of human rights educational and change initiatives, and the building of a human rights culture that addresses the needs and interests of all the communities within it.

After the conference, participants received a final conference report, a synopsis of the learning notes forms completed by participants, and an annotated index of presenters' materials. Commission staff met with the planning committee for the 2001 CASHRA conference to share learning and best practices from this event.

In related work supporting the conference, and to mark the halfway point of the United Nations' Decade for Human Rights Education, the Commission produced a publication profiling human rights education and diversity initiatives that were developed by service organizations, agencies, community groups and educational institutions in Alberta. The Commission made this publication possible for those wanting to know more about human rights activities across the province. The publication, *Tools for Transformation,* was reprinted due to demand.

Other Commission education services

In addition to organizing and hosting a national human rights conference, the Commission offered a program of educational activities designed to build awareness of human rights and of the Commission among general and targeted audiences, and lead to change. This educational focus was reinforced by the report produced by the Human Rights, Citizenship and Educational Fund Advisory Committee, *Promoting Equity and Fairness for all Albertans: Future Directions for*

Human Rights and Diversity. Based on input received from a series of meetings with Alberta stakeholders, the report noted the continuing importance of disseminating information about human rights, and about the Commission and its processes.

Two new information sheets, one on severance agreements, and a second on source of income were developed, the drug testing information sheet was rewritten to reflect the *Entrop* decision, and the information sheets on family status/marital status and sexual harassment were revised. New mastheads for the information sheets were produced and the sheets were redesigned using a more readable font.

Resource materials were made available at the Commission's offices, on line at the Commission's web site, through hard copy order forms, at special events and through other agencies. Information sheets were also distributed through an automated fax system.

Three issues of the Commission's newsletter, *The Citizen*, were produced: August 2000, December 2000 and March 2001. The Citizen was expanded to provide more content, a readership survey was conducted, and the layout was redesigned to increase readability. Approximately 3,500 copies of each issue were distributed in hard copy, by mail, at events, and through the regional offices, as well as being available on the web site.

The web site, which received as many as 20,510 visits a month, averaged 12,683 visits per month, and remained a key information source. In view of the central importance of the web site to its communications efforts, the web site was redesigned and redeveloped, based on client and stakeholder visitation patterns and input. The site will be launched in July 2001.

Nearly 1,600 representatives of businesses, community organizations, and educational and other public institutions learned about their rights and responsibilities through 57 presentations. Commission staff provided assistance and consultation to 13 businesses and public institutions to develop anti-discrimination policies for their workplace environment. The Commission's portable display was updated and material and information were displayed in 12 venues.

The *Understanding Gender Discrimination* and *Discrimination and the Law* educational video kits were both updated to incorporate the addition of sexual orientation as a protected ground. New stand-alone formats of each of the vignettes in each of the two videos were also produced that allow presenters to easily select and use individual vignettes during their presentations rather than needing to scroll through a video containing multiple vignettes. A new marketing

brochure was produced to promote the video kits, which was distributed to all public libraries across Alberta, to the stakeholder mailing list, and at the national human rights conference. A new approach to marketing and distribution through ICDR Inc. was established.

Greater emphasis on outreach and awareness building was reflected in new promotional items such as brochures on programs and services, and a bookmark promoting the web site. Promotional items were distributed in targeted mailings to *Citizen* subscribers, to delegates at the national human rights conference, in person at presentations and through displays, at Commission offices, and in targeted mailings.

In light of the majority of inquiries and complaints relating to workplace discrimination, the Commission launched a series of initiatives in 2000 – 2001 targeted to this area. The Alberta commission participated with other commissions across Canada on a national campaign that launched the poster "Human Rights are Everyone's Business" in May 2000. A research report on the positive impacts of beneficial human rights policies and practices in the workplace was also completed. Other educational initiatives related to workplace discrimination will be completed in 2001 – 2002. These include a survey of employers with the purpose of discovering how the Commission can be of assistance to them in helping them avoid and resolve human rights complaints in the workplace, the development of more comprehensive educational resources on key topics such as accommodation in the workplace, and the development of workshops and presentations focused on workplace discrimination.

Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund

The Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act, which created the Commission, also created the Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund. The Education Fund receives an annual allocation from Alberta Lottery Fund as well as a small amount of income from other sources, such as interest. The annual budget for the Education Fund in 1999 – 2000 was $1.2 million.

The Education Fund provides financial support for the Commission's education programs and services as well as grants to community groups for educational programs and services that are in keeping with the purposes of the Act.

The Minister has appointed a Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund Advisory Committee. A member of the legislative assembly chairs the committee and the vice-chair is the Chief Commissioner of the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship

Commission. There are also five community members. A major activity of the committee is to review grant applications and make recommendations to the Minister on grants. The committee also provides the Minister with advice on the overall use of the fund.

A separate annual review is available for the Education Fund from Alberta Community Development. It provides an annotated list of all of the grants approved during the fiscal year as well as other general information.

Part IV: Accountability

Measuring public awareness of the Commission and confidence in the Commission's work

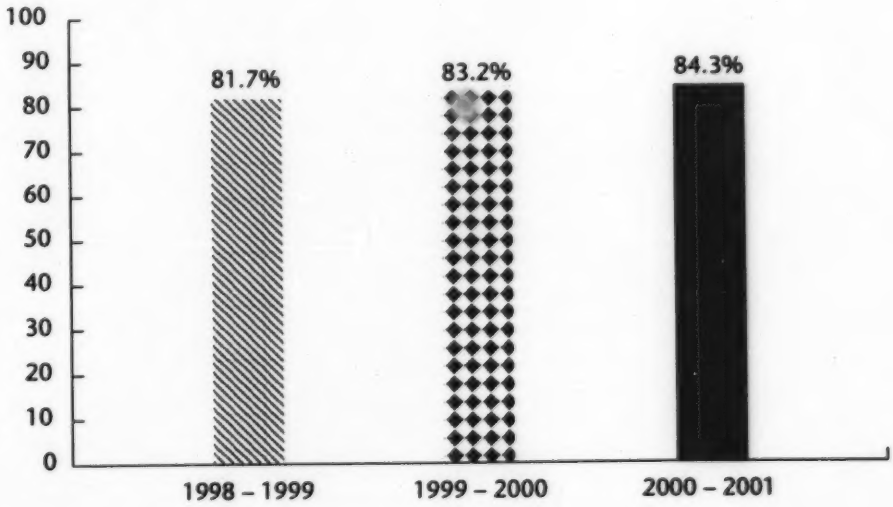
An independent province-wide telephone survey of 1,000 adult Albertans is undertaken annually to measure public awareness of the Commission and confidence in its work. This survey asks Albertans about their beliefs in how well human rights are protected in Alberta, their awareness of the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission, and their beliefs about how significant a role the Commission plays in ensuring that their rights are protected. Both the Commission and the Ministry of Community Development use the results of this survey as performance measures for the goal of protecting human rights and promoting fairness and access for all Albertans.

Percentage of Albertans who believe human rights are fairly well or very well protected in Alberta

In the survey, respondents were asked, "Thinking about human rights, overall, how well do you feel human rights are protected in the province of Alberta?"

How well human rights are protected in Alberta

Target: 80 percent



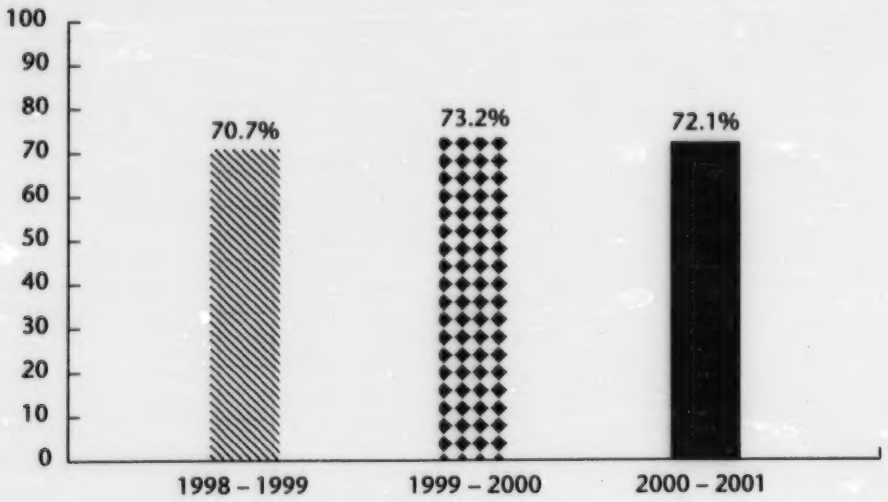
Source: Angus Reid Group, 1998 – 1999, Research Innovations Inc., 1999 – 2000 and 2000 – 2001.

In 2000 – 2001, 84.3 percent of Albertans believed human rights were "fairly well" or "very well" protected in Alberta. This is a 1.1 percent increase from 1999 – 2000. The target established for the year was 80 percent.

Percentage of Albertans who are aware of the Human Rights and Citizenship Commission

In the survey respondents were asked, "If you were concerned about protecting someone's human rights, where could you go for help or advice?" For those who did not identify the Commission, another question was asked, "To the best of your knowledge, does Alberta have a human rights commission?" The results are reflected in the chart below.

Awareness of the Commission
Target: 80 percent



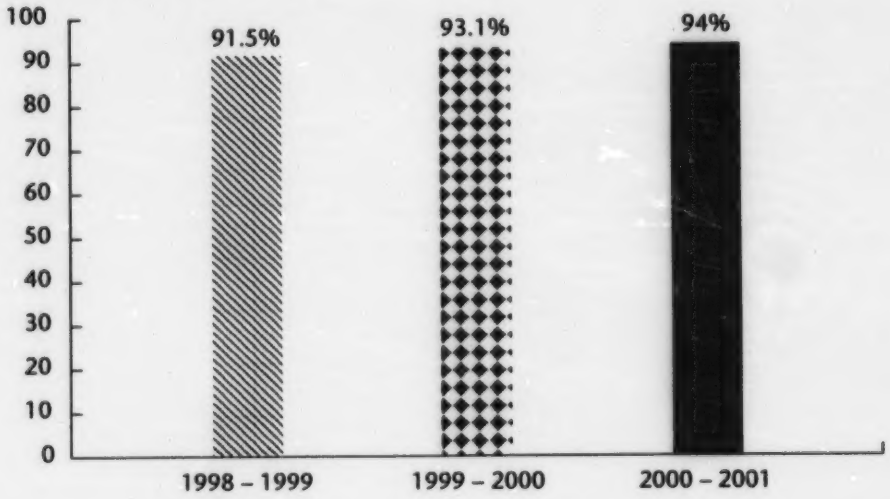
Source: Angus Reid Group, 1998 – 99, Research Innovations Inc., 1999 – 2000 and 2000 – 2001.

A total of 70.7 percent of respondents were aware of the existence of Alberta's human rights commission. This is a decrease of two and one half percent from the 1999 – 2000 results although 9.3 percent below the 2000 – 2001 target of 80 percent. Media coverage of human rights issues may have an impact on year-to-year variations in Albertans' awareness.

Percentage of Albertans who believe the Commission plays an important role in the protection of human rights

This measure reports how important respondents perceive the Commission to be in ensuring that human rights are protected in the province. First, only those aware of the Commission were asked to rate its importance. Secondly, prior to rating its importance, those aware of the Commission were provided with a brief description of the purpose of the Commission.

Believe the Commission plays an important role
Target: 90 percent



Source: Angus Reid Group, 1998 – 99, Research Innovations Inc., 1999 – 2000 and 2000 – 2001

On a five-point rating scale, the results from the top two categories, "very important" and "somewhat important" were combined. The results indicate that 94.0 percent of respondents believed the Commission played an important role in the protection of human rights. This represents an approximately one percent increase from the prior year, exceeding the 90 percent target. Respondents aware of the Commission perceive it to be effective in ensuring human rights are protected in the province.

Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission

Annual Review
2000 – 2001

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Toll-free access within Alberta is available by dialing 310-0000 and then entering the ten-digit number you wish to reach.

Deaf or hard of hearing with TTY:
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More information is available through an automated fax request line at (780) 422-8723 or through the Commission's web site at www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca